GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1492
ANSWERED ON:11.12.2003
PROCUREMENT OF HEPATITIS - B VACCINE
NEDURUMALLI JANARDHANA REDDY

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is clear stipulation that the Government would buy the vaccine only from WHO Geneva pre-qualified firms;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry of Defence is procuring Hepatitis-B Vaccine of sub-standard quality from an Indian Firm which is not WHO Geneva pre-qualified;

(c) if so, the actual facts thereof;

(d) whether the Government has received a number of representations from Members of Parliament against procurement of this sub-standard vaccine;

(e) if so, the action taken by the Government thereon;

(f) whether few deaths of children due to Revac-B (Hepatitis-B) vaccine manufactured by Bharat Biotech International Limited have been recorded in the office of Director General of Armed Forces Medical Supplies (DGAFMS);

(g) if so, the facts and the action taken in the matter;

(h) whether any inquiry regarding the quality of the medicine being supplied now has been conducted; and

(i) if so, the results of the inquiry and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) to (i): A statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO
(i) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1492 FOR 11.12.2003

There is no stipulation that Hepatitis-B Vaccine should only be procured from World Health Organisation (WHO), Geneva pre-qualified firms for use in the Armed Forces Hospitals.

The Vaccine being procured meets the prescribed specifications and is of standard quality. Vaccines are procured from the bidder who meets the prescribed specifications in the tender and whose price is the lowest. The Vaccine is further subject to inspection by the prescribed authorities.

Representations from Members of Parliament have been received for procurement of Hepatitis-B Vaccine from WHO Geneva, pre-qualified firms. These representations have been duly considered at the level of Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services (DG AFMS) when the procurement was being processed.

One death was reported from Jabalpur during a Hepatitis-B vaccination camp held in October-November, 2002.On autopsy, it was confirmed that the death was due to a rare allergic complication. No further inquiry was considered necessary, as the autopsy had confirmed that death had occurred due to the allergic reaction and not due to any deficiency in the quality of the vaccine.